Friendship 1950 the citizens of the two countries are free to move across Indo-Nepal border on reciprocal basis. Therefore, it is very difficult to have firm estimates of citizens of one country crossing into another country at any point of time. No large scale migration of people from Nepal to India has however, come to Government's notice. Also no cases of AIDS patients have been reported.

(c) and (d) There are reports of several divisive forces making efforts to infiltrate anti-national elements into the country but all concerned agencies especially in border areas have been alerted to keep strong vigil to prevent entry and exist of undesirable elements. Some of the measures adopted are as follows:—

(i) Government have taken steps to increase vigilance on the border to check the activities of undesirable elements and militants.

(ii) All Central and State Agencies have been instructed step up conforcement efforts in a coordinated manner.

(iii) Regular bi-lateral contact is being maintained with the authorities of His Majesty's Government in Nepal at various levels for closer cooperation between the agencies of the two countries for combating trans-border crime and terrorism.

Contract to KELTRON for supply of electrical and electronic items for Defence

*306. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kerala Government requested for offering contract to KELTRON, a State Public Sector Undertaing for supply of electrical and electronic items to Defence; and

(b) if so, the steps taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The offers of M/s Keltron have been duly considered. During the last six years, orders worth over Rs. 29.5 crores have been given to the Company by the Department of Defence Production & Supplies alone Contracts amounting to Rs. 630.71 lakhs have been awarded to the company during 1997. Two offers of M/s Keltron are under consideration.

Funds for widening of State Highways

*307. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have agreed to fund the widening of heavily used State Highways;

(b) if so, the criterion adopted to assist the widening of specific State Highways;

(c) whether any such request has come from Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the details therof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) Central Government is primarily responsible for development and maintenance of roads declared as National Highways. Roads other than National Highways are essentially the responsibility of the concerned State Governments.

However, the Central Government provides assistance to the State Governments for roads of inter-State and economic importance. Under this scheme, 100 per cent loan assistance is given to the projects which have

inter-State characteristics and 50 per cent for projects of a particular State. The criterion adopted are as under:--

(i) Inter-State Roads/Bridges necessary for ensuring through communication;

(ii) Roads/Bridges required for opening up new areas to which railway facilities cannot be provided in the near future.

(iii) Roads/Bridges which can contribute materially to rapid economic development, e.g. in hilly areas and places having mineral resources for exploitation.

(iv) Roads or bridges connecting National Highways.

Proposals for assistance are sanctioned on the basis of detailed estimates.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Hardware requirements of the Armed Forces

*308. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the major military hardware requirements for the armed forces on which the country continues to be dependent on imports;

(b) the estimated annual expenditure being incurred by Government on the imports of military hardware;

(c) the steps taken by Government so far the indigenisation of the military hardware and the achievement in removing foreign dependency; and

(d) what strategy has been formulated by Government to step up the indigenisation of the key areas of military hardware requirements and the period by which self sufficiency in these areas is to be achieved?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) India continuces to import systems and equipment from abroad for the Navy, Air Force and Army including aircraft, ships, submarines and their sub-systems whose production in India is not feasible or viable. The annual expenditure on imports includes debt repayment for previoussly purchased equipment from different sources.

(c) and (d) At ten-year plan for self-reliance in Defence Systems has been evolved to increas the ratio of expenditure on defence systems procured from indigenous sources to the total expenditure on acquisitions in a particular year from the present level of 30 percent to 70 percent by the year 2005. A 'Self-reliance Implementation Council' under the chairmanship of Scientific Adviser to RM has been constituted for the purpose.

A three-pronged thrust for achieving self-reliance is envisaged by (i) sustaining the existing defence systems through indigenisation of spares, (ii) upgrading existing weapon systems, (iii) progressive induction of more indigenous defence systems and reduce the imports of major systems.

National Sericulture Projects

*309. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have selected National Sericulture Projects in the country;

(b) if so, the salient features alongwith details thereof, State-wise;

(c) the amount of financial assistance received by Government from different international agencies and funds allocated to the States in the country, Stae-wise; and